



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **BENNETT COMMENTS ON JEFFORDS DEPARTURE FROM GOP**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Senator Bob Bennett made the following statement in response to today's announcement by Vermont Senator Jim Jeffords that he is leaving the Republican party and becoming an independent:

"I have great respect and affection for Jim Jeffords. For the past several years, I've sat next to him on the Senate floor and come to know him quite well. While I know this wasn't a spur of the moment decision, I do believe he's making a serious mistake and weakening his ability to get things done for the causes he believes in.

"Jim's moderate voice was heard in the Republican party. Now in the Democrat caucus, it will be drowned out by a chorus of voices saying the same thing. The country in general, and the Congress in particular, are more conservative than Jim Jeffords. Nowhere was this more evident than this week's 62-38 Senate passage of President Bush's historic tax cut and the 384-45 House passage of his education plan.

"Now we look to Tom Daschle and will see whether he can lead and legislate, rather than obstruct and object. I hope he surprises us and shows that he can."

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